

March 1996

"I'm asking for your help..."

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Less than a year ago, an opportunity arose which many of us recognized as the will and working of God. The opportunity appeared in the tangible form of real estate, but

COVER STORY REV. TROY PERRY

at its deepest core it is an opportunity to once again renew our faith that "all things are possible for those who believe" (Mark 9:23). An opportunity to once again see that the God of both our individual lives and of our fellowship is a God big enough to share our most ambitious dreams.

The General Council of UFMCC authorized me to negotiate the purchase of property in West Hollywood which would become home to both our global headquarters and MCC Los Angeles.

Today we stand at the threshold of that dream. And it's becoming a reality only because so many of you have shared this vision with me, daring to dream about UFMCC in the next generation. You have welcomed me into your churches from shore to shore as I spoke of this vision. And through it, we have become one in faith for our future.

Some of you have been able to pledge large amounts; some of you only a few pennies. I know in my heart that whatever the dollar value of your pledge, it has been because of your shared commitment with me to see God's vision through. I know



that those of you who have pledged are the keepers of our destiny.

I believe with all my heart that God wants this property to be ours. I know that it will become our greatest tool in the challenging years ahead. It will make it possible for us to model health, wholeness and holiness not only to the community to which God has raised us up to minister, but also to those who would have us fail.

We can complete our goal for this destiny if each of us does our part. If you have become a member of the Founders 500 by pledging \$1,000 or more, please consider an even greater act of faith. If you are not

yet among those who have pledged, I'm asking you now to consider joining me in this quest by pledging as much as you can. No time during our Capital Campaign has been more critical than right now, during our last few days. Can you help? Please consider sharing my vision of the UFMCC in the next millennium, and for the next generation.

GLOBAL OUTREACH REV. JUDY DAHL

Welcome Home to the Rainbow Nation

The brilliant colors and the undeniable etched presence of the face of God moves across the wide expanse of the new South Africa. Last month, Ravi Verma, Rev. Elder Hong Tan and I traveled as UFMCC representatives to this proud, free nation. As we settled into our two-week stay, vivid images from the not too distant past swept through my memory. The pictures of horror in Soweto and the marks of oppression which dug through the fabric of people's lives seemed softened now by the new yellow, black, blue, red, green, and white flag of South

Africa. It hangs everywhere, with the pride of liberation and the promise of even brighter futures.

This country, once the canvas of



Rainbows, Renewals, Representaion . . .

MCC Lubbock, Texas celebrated the dedication of their new church in February with special guest speaker Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey.

■ **St. Luke's MCC**, Jacksonville, Florida has a new theme for the year 1996: "See, I am Doing a New Thing." Rev. Ruth Jensen mused that "this really hit home for me" as she signed her first official contract as associate pastor and minister of education and outreach for the church. ■ **MCC**

Topeka, Kansas celebrated their 15th anniversary the weekend of March 1 with special guests Rev. Bob Arthur and singer Marsha Stevens. Congratulations! ■ **MCC congregations in Europe** are heavily involved in supporting the work of getting police to develop a policy on lesbian and gay people, policing issues, etc. **MCC Newcastle and Middlesborough**

has representation on two police liaison groups: Cleveland and Northumbria, stretching from Newcastle to the Scottish border, the largest geographic area of any police force in Europe. ■ **MCC Living Faith** in St. Louis, Missouri took great pleasure in welcoming their new senior pastor Rev. Robert Finch in February. ■ **MCC of Detroit**, Michigan will hold a spiritual renewal weekend with special guest Rev. Delores Berry on March 22-24. There will be a time for healing, praise and worship. ■ Congratulations to **MCC of the Rock** in Little Rock, Arkansas for being presented the Rainbow Award of Merit for 1995 by the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network. This award is for exemplary ministry in AIDS/HIV education and in caring for those affected by AIDS and HIV.

■ **St. John's MCC** of Raleigh, North Carolina celebrated their 20th anniversary with several events throughout the month of February. These events included a blessing of relationships, an anniversary concert, banquet, dance, and an anniversary worship service featuring the founder of UFMCC, Rev. Elder Troy Perry. ■ **Trinity MCC** of Arlington, Texas has chosen a builder for their future church home located in North Arlington.



■ **Above**— Ravi, Hong and Judy meet with the Church Council of Deo Gloria Family Church MCC. ■ **Right**— A congregational question and answer session preceded Deo Gloria's decision to affiliate with UFMCC.



bloodshed and separation, has begun to paint a new picture for the world, and our lavender people are a big part of this new future.

Our UFMCC delegation travelled there to meet with three church groups. Initial dialogue had begun two years ago when Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson and Rev. Kit Cherry attended the World Council of Churches meeting in South Africa. Since that time the Fellowship has been in dialogue with these groups about affiliation. Two of the three churches did decide to affiliate, The Reforming Church MCC and Deo Gloria Family Church MCC. Both churches are in Pretoria.

The Reforming Church MCC is led by the Rev. Andre Muller, a former Dutch Reformed minister and his 16-member church council. They have 600 members, 42 cell groups, and diverse and growing church ministries. They are proud of the work they have done to grow to this capacity in less than three years.

Deo Gloria Family Church MCC is led by Rev. Sue Wellman and her church council. They have approximately 75 members and attendance ranges between 60 and 100 on an average Sunday. Sue has been on national television several times and has been a key spokesperson in

deep passion and knowledge of coming through a desert time in the life of their individual journeys, their country's struggles, and their contemporary lives, to make our UFMCC richer, wiser and freer.

The third church we visited, Hope and Unity, a predominantly black church led by Rev. Thandekiso, feels God calling them to remain a unique cultural Christian community called out to the rest of the African continent. They want to remain in contact with us, to be loosely associated with us through conferences and communication, and tightly associated through love and prayer.

ORDINATION UPDATE

Board of Ordained Ministry Organizational Meeting

The organizational meeting of the Board of Ordained Ministry Steering Committee with the CCCC/Transition Team will be held on Wednesday, July 31, 1996 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Burbank

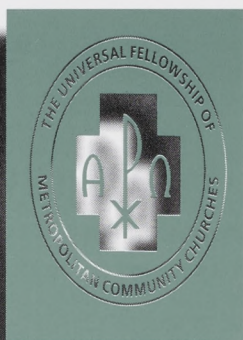
Hilton in Burbank, California. This will be a training session for all BOM chairs to help this process proceed smoothly. The Transition Team hopes that all who attend this meeting will plan to stay for Leadership Conference which begins August 1st and runs through August 4th, also at the Burbank Hilton. If you have any questions please feel free to call Rev. Pat Bumgardner at 212/629-7440.

keeping lesbigay Christians visible in the construction of the new South Africa.

Both church groups and leaders are part of our rainbow community. They bring a wealth of life experience and gifts to our table. They offer the

■ **MCC Sydney** filled a local theatre for its first-ever attempt at a large-scale community Christmas Eve service. Included in the program was the 40-member Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir.





The UFMCC-MCCLA Capital Campaign: A Miracle Springs from Tragedy

Early in 1995, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles launched the most ambitious fundraising project ever mounted by either group. A contract to buy real estate in West Hollywood, California which would house both groups was entered in to. The initial, short-term phase of the Capital Campaign has been to raise over \$1 million required for the down payment and move-in costs; the long-term quest is to retire the entire debt in three years. The Capital Campaign is now in the final days of the first phase.

Greetings from the Campaign Trail

■ Rev. David Farrell, Co-Chair

Neither rain, nor wind, nor sleet can keep Rev. Elder Troy Perry from his appointed rounds as the Capital Campaign "Tour of the Fellowship" continues at a furious pace! Ice storms, tornadoes, and weather that has caused the shut down of major airports did cause the cancellation of several stops along our route, but these have been re-scheduled for later times.

Thirty six MCC churches have now enjoyed Rev. Perry's presentation with exciting glimpses of his vision for the next generation. This effort has generated a total of \$330,704 in cash and pledges from enthused MCC members and friends. Those who have caught the vision of what potential lies ahead in the Fellowship's new West Hollywood facility.

Ten more MCC churches are scheduled for visits before April 1, and more than 30 others are on

the waiting list to be scheduled at later times.

It's hard to know who is enjoying this tour more, Rev. Perry and I, or the pastoral leaders and congregations where we've visited. Stories continue to pour in about the benefits that local churches are realizing after the campaign visits. Again and again we hear that congregations are experiencing a surge of excitement and optimism about their own local church's future as a result of Rev. Perry's energy. Along with a renewed sense of connection to UFMCC, local churches have reported dramatic increases in attendance, increased visitation, and renewed enthusiasm among current members.

Rev. Perry is committed to visiting every MCC in the Fellowship with this multi-media presentation. All that is required of the local church is an invitation and a willingness to allow him to choose the date of the visit. No honorariums, travel, lodging, or other expenses are expected from the local church. So don't delay in issuing an invitation to Rev. Perry to visit. Call me at 619/297-0875 or e-mail me at RevD@aol.com to be included in this tour of the Fellowship.

And please continue your prayers for the success of our Capital Campaign. And for pleasant travelling weather!

Where the Campaign Stands Today

■ Rev. David Farrell, Co-Chair

In June, 1995, just eight short months ago, the Capital Campaign did not have a single dollar in the bank. As you can see from the following figures, we have substantial cash and nearly \$380,000 in solid pledged commitments. However,

we will need to deposit just over \$1 million on the day escrow closes on our building. This cash shortfall of more than \$300,000 is our current dilemma. As of January 31, 1996, the UFMCC-MCCLA combined total exceeds \$1.2 million in cash and pledges!

Raised by MCCLA:

\$346,391.00 cash
\$162,271.00 pledges

Raised by UFMCC:

\$496,390.00 cash
\$217,292.00 pledges

Combined total: \$1,222,344.00

From this total, we have incurred approximately \$178,200 in preliminary expenses, including one-time costs and fees for plans, permits, consultations, and total fundraising costs.

All our energies between now and the close of escrow must be focused on securing some "major donor" gifts. Opportunities for naming and memorial designations are a perfect way to honor or memorialize a special friend or family member in your life. Please write or call for more information about these opportunities.

Rev. Perry's Tour of the Fellowship: Churches Visited to Date

July 1995

Dallas, Cathedral of Hope MCC \$14,100

September 1995

Oklahoma City, Lighthouse MCC \$6,688
Denton, Harvest MCC \$8,831
Forth Worth, Agape MCC \$31,056
Austin, MCC Austin \$29,511

October 1995

Phoenix, Gentle Shepherd MCC \$17,000
Ft. Lauderdale, Sunshine Cathedral \$14,262
Ft. Myers, St. John Apostle MCC \$3,744
Holiday, Spirit of Life MCC \$8,274
Sarasota, Church of Trinity MCC \$8,907
Key West, Key West MCC \$10,320
Boyd's, Open Door MCC \$3,019
Washington D.C., MCC Washington \$16,800
Richmond, MCC Richmond \$17,898

November 1995

Seattle, MCC Seattle \$4,000
Tacoma, New Heart MCC \$3,800
Portland, MCC Portland \$10,000
San Jose, MCC San Jose \$10,000
Santa Ana, Christ Chapel MCC \$1,200
Whittier, Good Shepherd MCC \$6,500
Cincinnati, New Spirit MCC \$6,204
Dayton, MCC Dayton Parish \$6,178
Columbus, New Creation MCC \$1,709
Toledo, Good Shepherd MCC \$7,411

December 1995

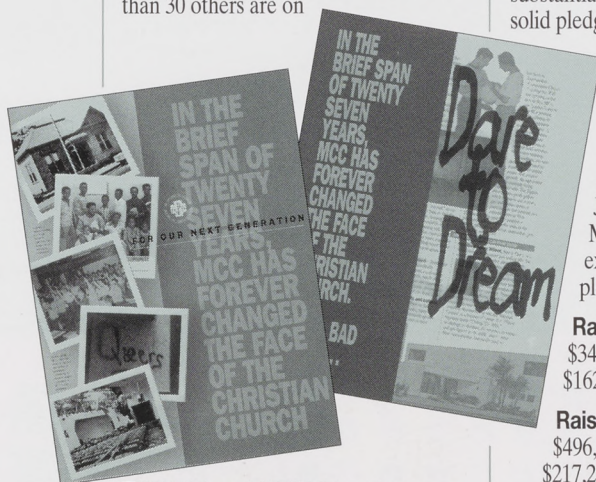
Minneapolis, All God's Children \$10,940

January 1996

Jacksonville, St. Luke's MCC \$17,572
Tallahassee, Gentle Shepherd MCC \$2,380
Daytona Beach, New Hope MCC \$2,537
Cocoa, Breaking the Silence MCC \$3,071
W. Palm Beach, MCC Palm Beaches \$9,789
Johnson City, MCC Tri-Cities \$2,347
Paducah, MCC Paducah \$5,362
Nashville, MCC Nashville \$11,633

February 1996

New Orleans, Vieux Carre MCC \$6,273
Birmingham, Birmingham MCC \$8,273
Montgomery, MCC Montgomery \$4,113
Huntsville, MCC of Huntsville \$11,182



■ **MCCLA and UFMCC** have been waging simultaneous campaign efforts.

A Witness to Los Angeles . . .

■ Nathan Meckley

Moving into West Hollywood, California on Santa Monica Boulevard is one of the most exciting opportunities ever presented to Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles. In keeping with the environment of West Hollywood, a world-renowned design center, and to compliment the headquarters of UFMCC, the prominent visibility of the new building requires outstanding design which must project a strong sense of presence. To this end, the esteemed architectural firm of Landa-Stevens has been engaged and has worked

NAMING AND MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

\$500,000 Level

UFMCC: 5-story Global Headquarters Building
MCCLA: 2-Story Sanctuary and Ministry Center

\$250,000 Level

UFMCC/MCCLA: Entry Plaza Level International Visitors Center. **MCCLA:** Sanctuary, Auditorium

\$100,000 Level

UFMCC: Second Floor Administrative Floor, Third Floor Executive Floor. **MCCLA:** Entry Level Water Wall and Fountain, Audio-Visual Center

\$50,000 Level

UFMCC: Second Floor Founder's Study (Rev. Perry's Office), Entry Level Gift Center. **MCCLA:** Second Floor Pastor's Study (Rev. Wilson's Office), Music Center, Child Care Center.

\$25,000 Level

UFMCC: Second Floor Conference Room, Ministry Resource Center. **MCCLA:** Second Floor Administrative Office, Classrooms (several).

\$20,000 Level

UFMCC: Second Floor Private Offices: AIDS Ministry, Communications, Clergy Development, Global Outreach.

with tremendous diligence and creativity to meet the congregation's desire for outstanding design within a modest budget.

MCC Los Angeles will occupy the two-story building at 8714 Santa Monica Boulevard. In general, the ground floor will contain the sanctuary and related spaces, and the second story will house local church offices. The underground level will be used for parking and storage.

Both the fellowship offices and MCC

Los Angeles will be accessed from a beautiful outdoor courtyard, through street-front gates or from the rear parking area. Also, one will be able to enter via elevator from underground parking, designed primarily for those with physical challenges. Once inside the first floor, entrance to the sanctuary will be through an attractive lobby/vestibule area.

As is the concern of most church communities, the sanctuary of MCCLA is designed to be a place of beauty, inspiration, and function. Overall, it will reflect great style, but also great utility. Natural light will infuse the sanctuary/auditorium from the ceiling, which will open through the second floor to a skylight in the roof above. This large bay will allow for ample light as well as being an inspirational design feature. Along one wall leading to the chancel/stage area will be a series of colored glass blocks, allowing further light and color in the sanctuary. In the over 4,000 square foot sanctuary, MCCLA can easily accommodate its current congregation with room for significant growth in attendance. Seating will be comfortable, stackable chairs, allowing for flexible seating and alternative uses of the space.

The chancel/stage area itself will be in a unique two-level geometric configuration. The central area will hold lectern, communion table, and seating for worship leaders, and will be elevated above the floor for visibility. One step higher and to one side will be a large area for musicians and instruments. A ramp will provide alternate and full access to both levels for those in wheelchairs and others in need of such access.

There are several other special design

features related to the sanctuary-auditorium. A child-care room will provide adults with infants and young children a sound-proof space where they will have greater freedom but may still hear and observe worship while distractions to other participants are kept to a minimum. Also in the rear will be a room for clergy vesting and worship leader gathering, as well as secured storage for vestments and other supplies. A sacristy and an audio/video room for the auditorium, which will be equipped for recording and projection, will be contiguous to the sanctuary.

The first floor will be completed with a kitchen, rest rooms and miscellaneous office and meeting spaces.

MCCLA is in a period of dynamic change and many future needs cannot be accurately anticipated. Therefore, the design approach to the second story remains very flexible. Primarily, this floor will contain church offices and educational/meeting rooms. Beyond the private offices needed immediately, other spaces will remain open for future configuration into meeting rooms, classrooms, reception, and gathering areas, or for more offices as are required.

One of the benefits of partnership between UFMCC and MCCLA is shared usage of space. For example, fellowship and social activities following MCCLA Sunday worship services are expected to center in the outer courtyard and lobby of the office building.

MCC Los Angeles is eagerly antici-

pating moving into a stylish and useful building, lifted straight from the pages of *Church Beautiful!*

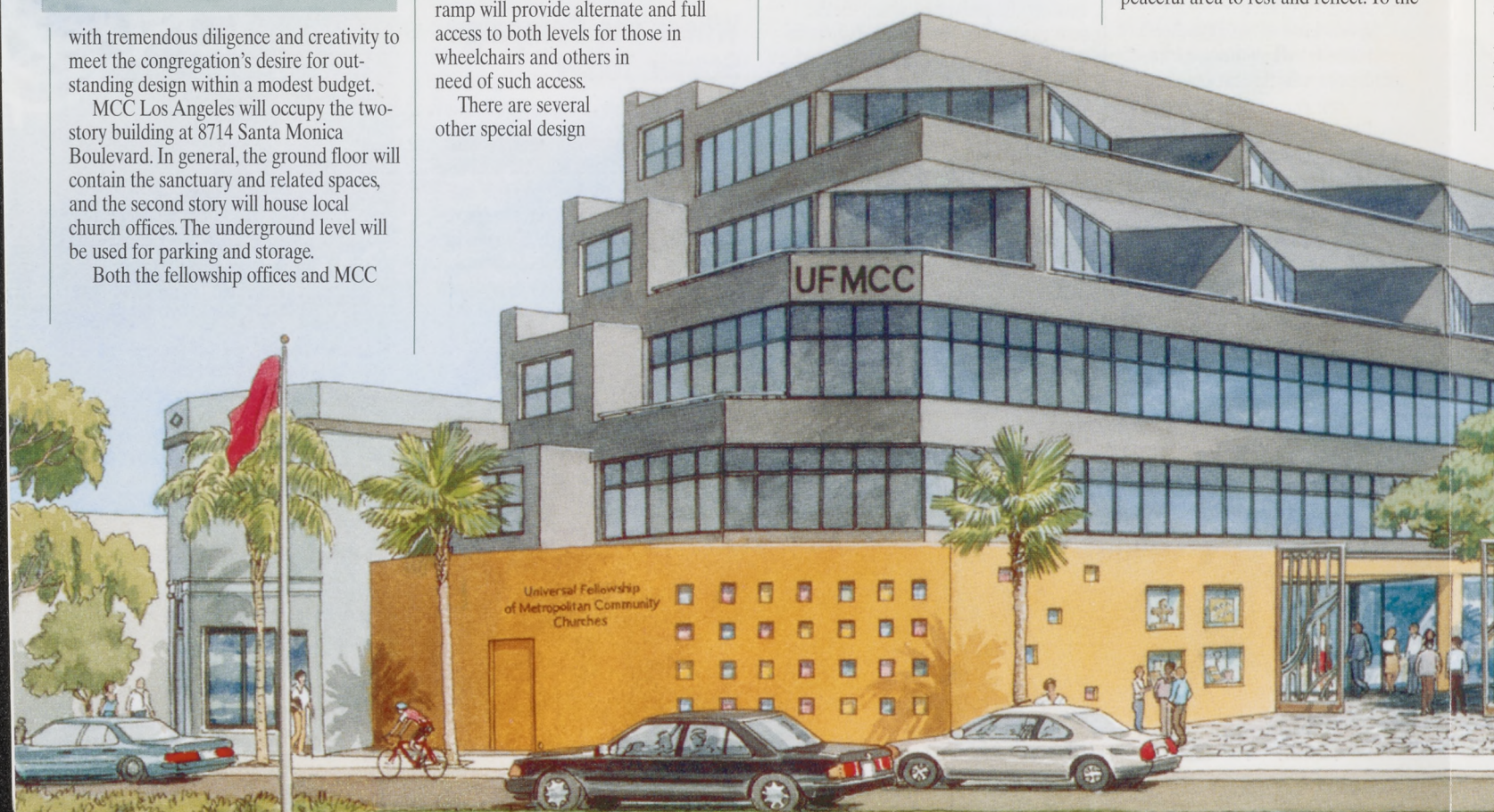
. . . and to the World!

■ Rev. Elder Don Eastman

It is no secret that the MCC movement has already made a tremendous impact upon the Christian world. Religion sociologist R. Stephen Warner says that "MCC has put the issue of religious rights for homosexuals squarely on the agenda of mainline churches." The *Advocate* says MCC "is arguably the largest organization in the world touching the lives of gays and lesbians." But the most visible evidence of the work of MCC churches worldwide is seen in those individuals who have found spiritual transformation, self-esteem, and a new sense of hope and purpose for their lives.

Seeing this experience repeated in the lives of others is our mission. Our new headquarters facility will help every one of us in each local church fulfill this mission of inclusion. Empowered with information and inspiration, we will have the tools to reach out to those in need, to become advocates for justice, and to build loving, caring communities.

Our new facility will give us an environment for the creation of new opportunities. When we walk into the entry plaza, the first view will be the memorial wall of water . . . and a peaceful area to rest and reflect. To the



right will be MCCLA, our historic mother church. To the left will be the UFMCC visitor center with an interactive exhibit area, a gift and literature shop, and the Edith Allen Perry Memorial Chapel, dedicated to the memory of parents everywhere who have unconditionally loved their children.

The second floor of this attractive building will be the hub of our international service and resource center, and the administrative offices of UFMCC. Here, programs are coordinated to support the ministries of local MCC churches, such as the UFMCC AIDS ministry, Ecumenical Witness and Ministry, and the Strategic Growth Initiative. Here useful resources are developed and distributed, such as *Keeping In Touch* and the growing number of materials produced by the Resource Center. Here, services are provided to sustain our global connection, like our general conferences, Ministry of Global Outreach, and Office of Clergy Development.

The third floor of this facility, occupied by a tenant until 1998, will be the future home of UFMCC's Technology Center. Our goal is to see state-of-the-art technology connect MCC churches everywhere to a UFMCC *Intranet*, where all information and resources are immediately accessible and available to local church leaders. Work on this Intranet will begin with our networking of the UFMCC offices upon occupancy of the new building, and then expand to the networking of the General Council and Board of Elders.

Training and technical support for local church leaders will be an important feature of the Technology Center. An archives project will convert all historical

documents, photographs, and videos to a computer database to be accessed through the UFMCC Intranet. Another key feature of the Technology Center will be continuing expansion and development of MCC's use of the Internet for outreach to the vast multitude of people who have never heard of a Metropolitan Community Church.

The new global headquarters facility of UFMCC will enhance the ability of each congregation everywhere to reach out and connect with others, using a liberating message of healing and hope, bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to a new global generation.

Headquarters, Headquarters, Where is the Headquarters?

■ Rev. Elder Troy Perry

The only element of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches that rivals the "travelling" of MCC Los Angeles throughout the years has been the location of our headquarters offices! While the founding church and the UFMCC headquarters were at times housed together, more often they have been in different locations.

We first rented separate office space in an old house on Virgil Street in the Silverlake area of Los Angeles. We referred to it as the "parsonage" and it was here that many of the church-sponsored programs met and a drop-in center was established. There was also a need at the time to house visiting clergy and guests from around the world who had heard of MCC and responded by traveling to Los Angeles to see for themselves. As early as the first year of our existence, media began to communicate our story, and we received letters from churches, individuals, and pastors worldwide. It was here that Arthur Green, a Catholic priest, came

and asked permission to start a MCC Church in Chicago. I ordained him on the spot and told him that the only thing we had to give him for his return to Chicago was our good name!

Within a month, two women and two men appeared from Dallas, a week apart, to investigate starting a church there. The women were Rob Shivers and her lover Rae DeVries. The two men were former Catholics, Richard Vincent and Victor Pass. Rob and Richard later became clergy in our denomination, and in 1973 Richard Vincent was elected to the Board of Elders.

We housed the church and fellowship offices at the Virgil Street house for about a year and a half, until we bought our first property, the first real estate ever owned by a gay/lesbian organization. The church was located at 22nd and Union Streets, near downtown Los Angeles. It was here that the first General Conference was held in 1970, and here that MCCLA experienced the loss of its building for the first time. In January, 1973, the church was torched in a pre-dawn blaze officially described as one of "suspicious origin."

We found temporary office facilities on Western Avenue while the church met at other various temporary locations. After a year, MCCLA and the Fellowship were together again at our new facility on Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles, but only for about a year. Fellowship offices moved into the new Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center on Highland Avenue near Santa Monica Blvd. in Hollywood. After another year, we moved once again to a location I will never forget!

It was at 11th and Hill Streets, just three blocks north of MCCLA, and we were on the sixth floor. Each evening,

the elevators were turned off at 6 p.m. Part of our offices were used in the evenings for classes by Samaritan Theological Institute, UFMCC's training college. And if any of our students were even a minute late, they had to walk up all six flights of stairs to the classrooms. I used to cut up and say that we had some of the best-looking, in-shape students in the world because of those every-night journeys up six flights of steep stairs!

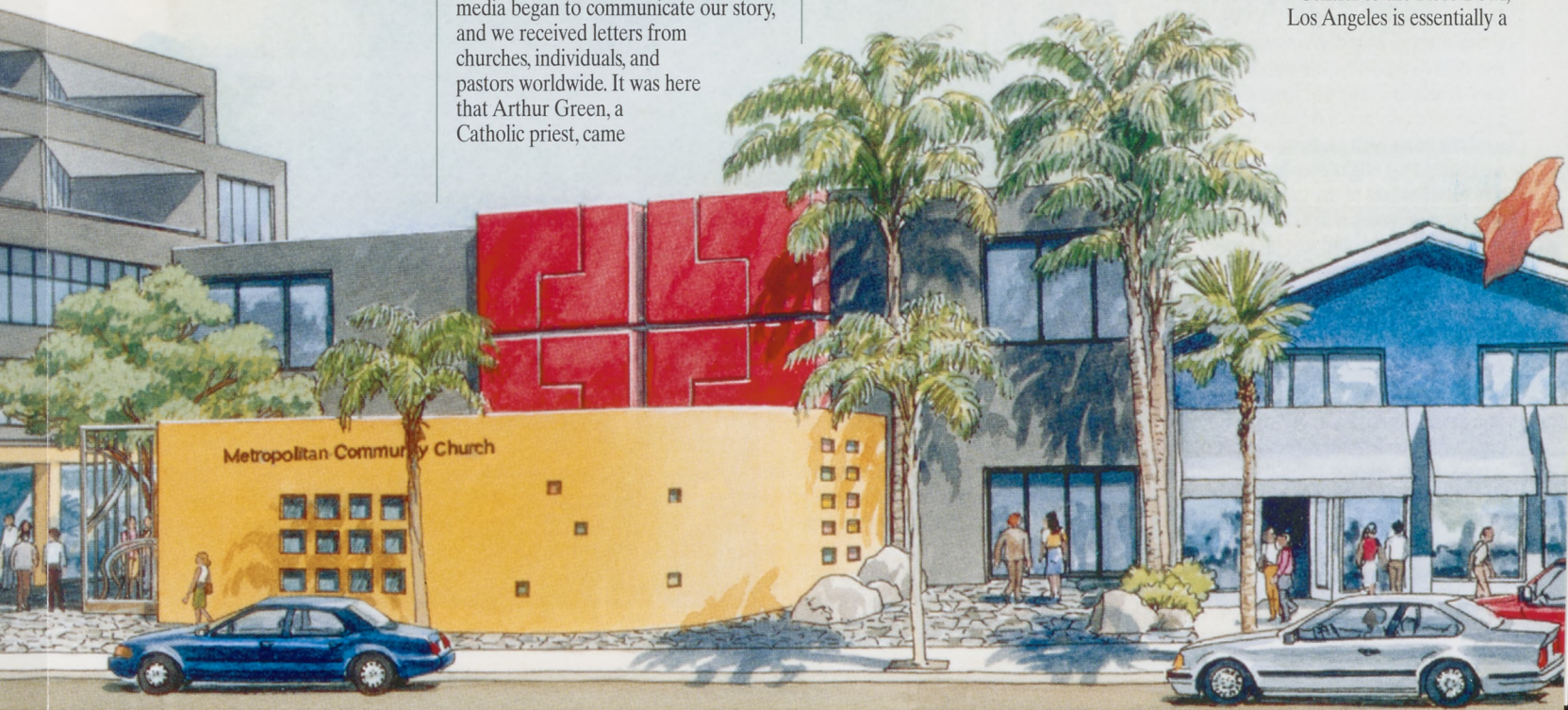
In September, 1978, we moved the Fellowship offices to our present location on Santa Monica Blvd. This building was owned by the United Methodist Church and, in fact, was their district headquarters and office of their bishop for Southern California. Over the course of our 18-year tenancy, the neighborhood has changed drastically, and a space that was quite adequate when we first moved in has not been so for many years.

I've always thought it a shame that UFMCC has not been able, until now, to buy its own facilities. It took an earthquake which destroyed 79 church buildings throughout Los Angeles, including MCCLA, to create the opportunity which we hold today. Truly, out of tragedy, God can create a miracle!

It Only Feels Like Forty Years

■ Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson

The congregation of MCC Los Angeles is a vibrant, resilient, and very diverse one. We live in one of the most racially, linguistically and culturally complex cities in the world. From Hollywood to East L.A., from Beverly Hills to the beach, South Central to the Rose Bowl, Los Angeles is essentially a



large city formed from many smaller ones. In the center of it all is the relatively tiny city of West Hollywood, design capital of the world, and home to two primary groups: the lesbian community and Russian Jewish immigrants.

And now it has become the destination of MCCLA's journey. Our "wandering in the wilderness" feels like we've been reliving the history of the children of Israel. And it *feels* like every single one of forty years!

On Christmas Eve, 1993, I sat during service in our beautiful new Culver City sanctuary and marvelled at how near we were to the conclusion of so many years of struggle. The church was full of familiar and unfamiliar faces, we had heat for the first time, and the just-completed social hall was decorated and brimming with the energy of the season. Our facility was nearly finished. Seven years of uncertainty and determination were paying off. How could I have ever imagined that within two weeks I would be standing amid the rubble of this structure, staring at a glazed tile which used to cover the building's dome, 80 feet in the air.

The purchase and remodeling of our Culver City facility had been a challenge all its own. During the time that MCCLA was housed in the Belasco Theatre on Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles, problems with the building and the impending deadline to complete seismic requirements on it loomed. In addition, the location was not exactly gay or lesbian identified. The neighborhood was deteriorating rapidly, and MCCLA was right next to another theatre that showed porn movies. We were feeling very much out of the heart of the community which we were trying to serve.

For three years the church had tried to sell the building, and finally received an acceptable offer just one week after I became pastor. At the same time, our search committee had located the former home of King's Tropical Inn in Culver City. It was a very distinctive structure built in the 1920's, located on the west side, with easy access to public transportation and adjacent to two major freeways. It was relatively close to West Hollywood, as near as we thought we might ever get considering real estate values of the time. And it appeared to have potential. It included a large parking area and several houses which eventually became the first home of Caring For Babies With AIDS, the first care facility of its kind west of the Mississippi River. CBA later bought all three "back" residential properties from us.

But the structure needed major renovation as well as seismic reinforcing to meet current city code. And we could not occupy it while this work was being completed. We never imagined that it would take 18 months to finish. And we never imagined that the nationwide savings and loan scandal would nearly destroy our dreams.

A bank failure in the late 80's forced us

into a dire financial situation. We could not find another source of refinancing at anything but outrageous rates. We discovered that almost no one would finance a church, regardless of its ability to pay or its equity situation. We were forced to deal with a thrift organization who gouged us at a time when construction costs escalated because of unseen problems with the building. There was a point when MCCLA came within very few days of defaulting on its real estate obligations. Our future was in jeopardy.

Two things brought us through terrible crises. First, God asked me to fast and I responded. We made efforts to shed light on "red lining" in the financial industry that threatened not only our church but all religious organizations. And we resolved to "stand our ground," to refuse to give up our dream and our real estate. I fasted to make a way where there seemingly was no way. And we raised enough money to get us through the next couple years.

Secondly, church members responded with a new resolve, and our efforts to publicize our plight brought new members into our midst. Many members of MCCLA gave sacrificially of their time and energy. And the energy of these new people reinvigorated the rest. One new member single-handedly took on the project of com-

worship, to preach, to pray, to reach out to people with AIDS, and to youth in need. And we began to grow as a congregation. We held church growth seminars, and we found ways to hire competent paid staff. We had a lively weekly church program, and our evening programs were attracting very good attendance.

With the progress on the building, and the completion of our new social hall and office areas, MCCLA was on "a roll." Our new sanctuary, which seemed so huge as the painstaking work of completing each square inch of it was going on, suddenly didn't seem so large at all!

But there I was, January 17, 1994, staring at boards laying on the ground that I recognized as part of the ceiling! We had just dedicated our new, donated church sign the week before. How could this be happening . . .

We were "in the wilderness" once again. First we moved to a sound stage owned by a company where one of our members was an executive. Then to a synagogue for a few short weeks. This was the home of Congregation Beth

■ **No one knows** how it feels to lose your church better than members of MCC Los Angeles. Its building at 22nd and Union Streets was torched; its Culver City property collapsed in the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

Chayim Chadashim, the gay and lesbian Jewish congregation that had been founded at MCCLA.

Then for 18 months we met in the gymnasium of a local junior high school, not far from the Pico Union neighborhood which once housed MCCLA. While this school was near a freeway and was accessible to buses, it was an unfamiliar area to most of our members and far from "our" community. And two months after we arrived, the parking lot was completely torn up for many more months!

While our members persevered, it was a difficult place to attract newcomers, and the experience proved to be discouraging and challenging. Also during this time we were still paying the mortgage on the destroyed Washington Blvd. property.

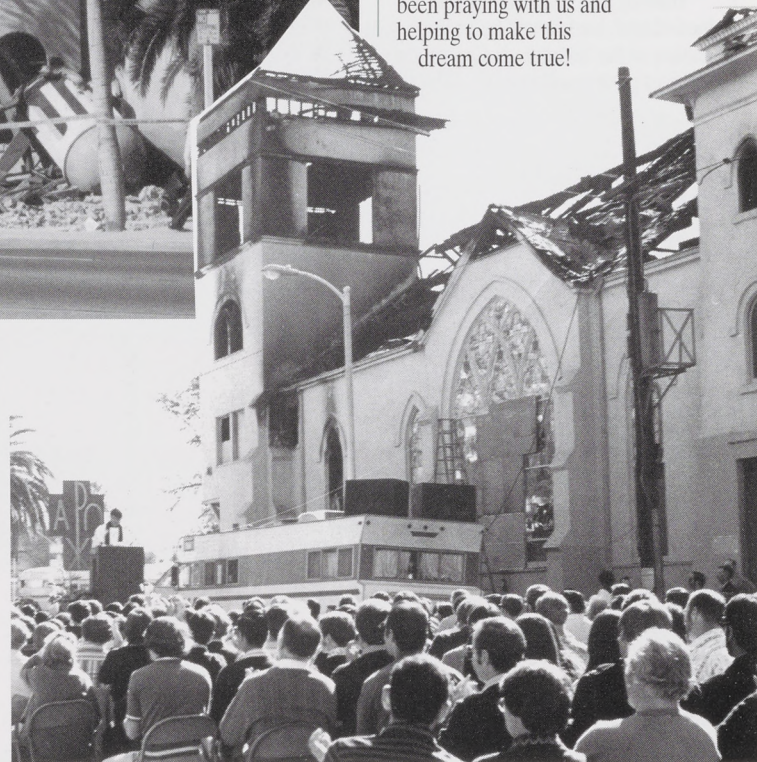
Finally in December of last year, we began to meet in the auditorium of a local West Hollywood park, an attractive facility in a familiar neighborhood, with lots of parking and suitable facilities. But 1996 will be our year! In the 28th year of our existence, we are coming out of our "wilderness" to a beautiful, modern facility, in the gayest little city within the big city of Los Angeles!

We are coming home to a new sanctuary that will seat more than 400 with beautiful office space and classrooms that can house the programs we dream of providing. And we will be home with the UFMCC once again. Our members and friends have given to an amazing degree, and have prayed and longed for this overwhelming opportunity. Thanks to all of you who have been praying with us and helping to make this dream come true!



pleting the renovation. Another new member, an attorney, assumed the responsibility of finding both a source of financing at reasonable rates, and cleared up a complicated property tax mess that had encumbered our property. Members participated in work parties every Saturday for a year and a half. We moved into our sanctuary on October 1, 1986. It had little in the way of creature comforts, but each week we came to church and witnessed the progress that was made during the previous work week.

Somehow through all the crises we continued to serve the community, to



SGI Team Develops Avenues for Growth

Why do Metropolitan Community Churches grow? Answering this question is the primary quest of an advisory team appointed by the Board of Elders. The Strategic Growth Team, which met recently at Cathedral of Hope MCC in Dallas, has begun the work of bringing a clear focus on the choices and changes necessary for effective outreach and growth in local MCC congregations throughout the world.

The team has identified three strategic issues critical to growing congregations: leadership development, research/analysis, and target church models.

Leadership Development The culture of MCC congregations, rooted in our most cherished beliefs and principles, needs to develop a greater shared value of growth around effective, competent leadership. This leadership, both clergy and laity, must be better equipped with skills and information, empowering each local congregation to fulfill a mission and vision that leads to growth. Two vital elements are needed. First, important leadership competencies need to be featured in all MCC education and training efforts at fellowship, district, and local church levels. Another key element of leadership development is improving the quality and content of information available and accessible to the local church.

Research/Analysis Valuable information, needed by local church leaders, can be provided by new databases which give a Fellowship-wide profile of MCC congregations and members, including both evaluative and demographic data. A new congregational survey is already in use among target churches of the Strategic Growth Initiative. As more churches participate, a growing amount of data will be available.

Additional sources of useful information can be obtained from other denominations and movements, religious sociologists, polling organizations and church growth para-church organizations. This, combined with other research and analysis by Strategic Growth Team members and consultants, will equip local church

leaders with new information to facilitate outreach and growth.

Target Churches By the end of 1996, ten MCC congregations will have become target churches, receiving comprehensive and continuing consultation services on strategic planning, leadership development, and resources that will help them grow beyond typical numeric plateaus. The experience of these churches will provide models for learning as other MCC congregations engage in ministry planning. Successful results will give both inspiration and information to local church leaders who have a passion for outreach and growth.

Members of the Strategic Growth Team include Rev. Arlene Ackerman, Rev. Brent Hawkes, Rev. Michael Piazza, Rev. Sandi Robinson, Rev. Elder Hong Tan, Mr. Ravi Verma (consultant), and Rev. Elder Don Eastman, who directs the UFMCC Strategic Growth Initiative.

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE NATHAN MECKLEY

Prominent Church Analyst to Speak at Leadership Conference

UFMCC 1996 Leadership Conference will host several prominent speakers including author Tex Sample. A



renowned analyst of the role of the church in relation to social trends and Professor of Church and Society at St. Paul School of

Theology in Kansas City, Missouri, Tex Sample has authored several books including *U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches*, and *Hard Living People and Mainstream Christians*. Among other guests for the conference will be Methodist bishop Leontine Kelly, and featured preacher Sherman Hicks, former bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

1996 Leadership conference will include Ministry of Diversity in Spiritual Community (formerly Department of People of Colors) offerings. With the theme, "The Gospel for a Global Generation," a wide variety of topics will be presented and inspirational worship services will be held daily. Institutes on people of colors in leadership and youth issues are planned, and plenaries and presentation topics will range from technolog-

ical trends and the impact of globalization on the church, to pastoral and leadership models for women. Look for further details in upcoming issues of *Keeping in Touch*, plus watch for lodging information to be mailed soon. A conference registration form appears on the outside wrapper.

Leadership Conference will be held Thursday, August 1 through Sunday, August 4 at the Burbank Airport Hilton in Burbank, California.

CLASSIFIED

UFMCC Communications Director

Position: Dynamic individual sought to manage external public relations with media, ecumenical groups and other organizations. Will manage internal public relations and communications within UFMCC, manage online/Internet communications, and assist in translation projects. Qualifications/Skills Desired: Experience in dealing with media and public relations, good writing and verbal skills, computer online familiarity, and ecumenical awareness. Salary \$30,000 to \$35,000, excellent benefits. Resume to: Ravi Verma, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd. Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029, Fax 213/464-2123, by April 15, 1996.

MCC of the Rockies, Denver, Colorado, is seeking a full-time Senior Pastor. We are a congregation of more than 300 members with the capability for growth to a much larger size with the right leadership. We are looking for strength in the pulpit, leadership skills, and the ability to keep Lay energy focused on a mutually determined course for ministry and growth. For more information and an application, please write or FAX: Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 29738, Denver, CO 80229, FAX: 303-438-9062. (All contacts will be kept confidential).

24 HENRY GUESTHOUSE is a serene, non-smoking environment close to everything in San Francisco's Gay Castro District. 1-800-900-5686. (415) 864-5686. FAX: (415) 864-0406.

Attention Gay Service Members: Know your legal rights. Say nothing, sign nothing, and get legal help if you are ever investigated. Call Service Members Legal Defense Network for confidential counseling. 202/328-FAIR.

KEEPING IN TOUCH MARCH 1996

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation. *Keeping in Touch* may be freely copied for distribution in UFMCC. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution. For other distribution, please request permission. Subscriptions are free upon request. Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100. Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

Editorial Board:

Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator;
Ravi Verma, Director of Administration

Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting,
Norm Mason, Graphic Concept

A FELLOWSHIP OF ACTIVITY

Fairness, Wellness, Purpose . . .

Rev. Pat Langlois has been elected senior pastor of Emmanuel MCC, Albuquerque, New Mexico. ■

Congratulations to three MCC members who are now serving on the steering committee of the Kentucky Fairness Alliance:

Laura Petrie and **Tim Rice** of MCC of Paducah, and **John Cutright** of Lexington's MCC.

■ MCC San Diego, California has announced two ministry appointments.

Rev. Dusty Pruitt was appointed interim senior pastor while the church continues their search process, and

Rev. Houston Burnside was appointed ministries coordinator, in charge of coordinating all church activities. ■ **Rev. James McManus**, team pastor of MCC Newcastle, England was invited by the chaplains of the colleges of The University of Durham with the dean and chapter of Durham Cathedral, to give a lecture on "HIV and the Church: Keeping the Purpose or Missing the Point." ■ **Rev. Alice Jones** joined the Wellness Staff at Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, Texas the first of February, as a pastoral counselor. ■ Congratulations to **Mark Williams** who was selected as the Southwest regional representative to the Missouri State Health Department for HIV infection.

Top 20 Tithes

December 1995

1. Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas \$7,343.35
2. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston \$3,885.35
3. Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale \$2,543.80
4. King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg \$2,255.78
5. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville \$2,337.26
6. MCC Washington, Washington \$1,794.71
7. MCC San Francisco, San Francisco \$1,568.31
8. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston \$1,535.83
9. MCC of the Rockies, Denver \$1,271.24
10. MCC New York, New York \$1,145.00
11. MCC Austin, Austin \$1,143.45
12. First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta \$901.36
13. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach \$838.53
14. Open Door MCC, Boyds \$821.11
15. MCC Charleston, Charleston \$809.42
16. MCC of Greater St. Louis \$781.28
17. MCC Charlotte, Charlotte \$777.89
18. Holy Cross MCC, Pensacola \$770.80
19. Agape MCC, Ft. Worth \$761.55
20. MCC Louisville, Louisville \$753.11

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

December 1995

1. MCC of the Disciples, Washington \$56.87
2. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo \$37.23
3. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston \$35.06
4. MCC of the Redwood Empire \$30.52
5. MCC Johnson County, Shawnee \$28.41
6. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach \$28.33
7. Lexington's MCC, Lexington \$26.82
8. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville \$26.77
9. New Life MCC, Charlotte \$25.78
10. MCC Huntsville, Huntsville \$25.53
11. MCC of the Peninsula, Redwood City \$25.06
12. MCC of Living Faith, St. Louis \$24.53
13. MCC New Haven, New Haven \$22.30
14. MCC Louisville, Louisville \$22.28
15. New Spirit MCC, Cincinnati \$22.28
16. MCC of the Living Springs, Eureka Springs \$22.06
17. Spirit Song MCC, Little Rock \$22.01
18. Open Door MCC, Boyds \$21.78
19. New Life MCC, Norfolk \$21.78
20. MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque \$21.05

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church.)

Top 20 Tithes

January 1996

1. Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas \$10,550.88
2. Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale \$5,007.09
3. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston \$4,626.35
4. MCC Washington, D.C. \$3,971.78
5. King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg \$3,242.35
6. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton \$2,647.80
7. MCC of the Rockies, Denver \$2,506.42
8. MCC New York, New York \$2,279.47
9. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville \$2,061.28
10. MCC San Francisco, San Francisco \$1,939.28
11. MCC Los Angeles, Los Angeles \$1,709.97
12. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston \$1,565.26
13. First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta \$1,534.23
14. MCC Richmond, Richmond \$1,506.06
15. MCC Tampa, Tampa \$1,397.52
16. Agape MCC, Ft. Worth \$1,352.92
17. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach \$1,322.25
18. Open Door MCC, Boyds \$1,221.30
19. MCC Key West, Key West \$1,192.07
20. MCC Charlotte, Charlotte \$1,141.00

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

January 1996

1. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo \$40.33
2. Christ Alive MCC, Vancouver \$38.60
3. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston \$37.72
4. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach \$35.17
5. Gentle Shepherd MCC, Tallahassee \$35.15
6. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton \$34.93
7. MCC of the Disciples, Washington, D.C. \$32.07
8. MCC in Charlottesville, Charlottesville \$30.39
9. Basisgemeinde MCC, Hamburg \$29.69
10. MCC Johnson County, Shawnee \$29.19
11. MCC Bournemouth, Dorset \$28.55
12. MCC Amarillo, Amarillo \$28.43
13. Eternal Light MCC, Lacey \$28.03
14. MCC With A Vision, Longview \$27.36
15. MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church \$26.44
16. Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale \$26.06
17. MCC New York City, New York \$25.27
18. JESUS MCC, Indianapolis \$24.20
19. MCC of the Palm Beaches, W. Palm Beach \$23.74
20. New Life MCC, Charlotte \$23.55

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church.)

Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community Churches

5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304
Los Angeles, California 90029 USA
Telephone 213/464-5100 Facsimile 213/464-2123

FIRST CLASS PRESORT

Leadership Conference Registration Form The Gospel for a Global Generation

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